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# math & science

## teachers in the Peace Corps





## **MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE TEACHERS IN THE PEACE CORPS**

The teaching of mathematics and science is one of the most needed contributions Peace Corps Volunteers can make to the developing nations. The future of these nations hinges directly on their ability to speed technological and industrial development. To begin, they must have trained technicians.

In British Honduras there were no teachers able to instruct secondary students in advanced science. Now Volunteers are enabling Hondurans to pass the standard British-type GCE examination, a prerequisite to college entrance.

In Ghana, Peace Corps Volunteers are helping fill a constant need for science and mathematics instruction at the secondary level.

In Colombia, Volunteers are helping establish mathematics and science training centers where



Colombian teachers may increase their competence by studying the latest developments in these fields.

Although about one-third of all Peace Corps Volunteer teachers teach some mathematics and science, the demand for Volunteers grows faster than the Peace Corps can fill requests. Volunteer teachers will continue to be needed abroad until enough host-country students are educated to staff classrooms.

If you are a mathematics or science major with a B.A. or a graduate degree, the Peace Corps offers you an opportunity to help lay the foundation for technological progress by teaching these subjects in classrooms overseas. For example, Volunteer Jane Gibson taught at the University College for Women, an affiliate of Osmania University, Hyderabad, India. Now home after two years' service, Jane recalls, *"There was no one textbook that teachers and students all bought and followed in the chemistry course I taught."*



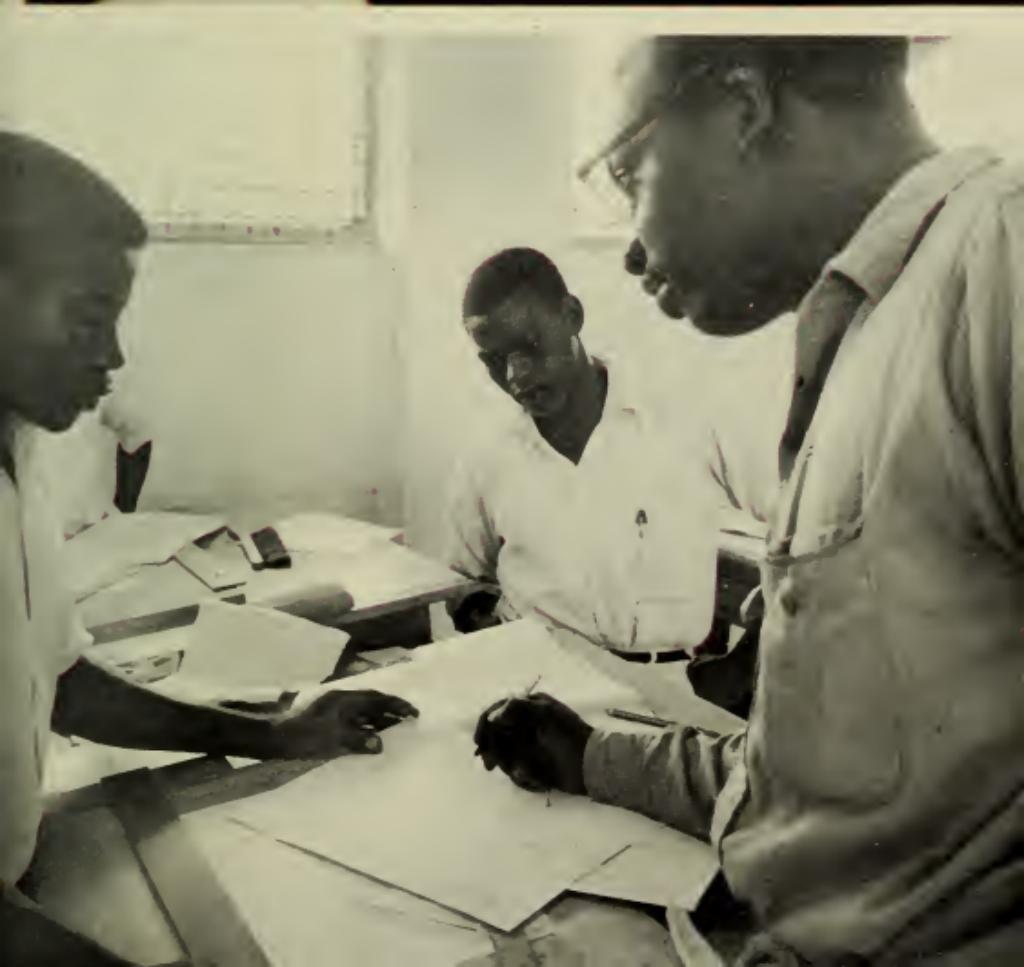


*The students depended almost entirely on lecture notes given by their teachers and seldom referred to books. The emphasis in their schooling was different—the students knew some things better than American students and had not heard of other things which American students know well. When discussing the law of indestructibility of matter, I discovered none of my students had ever seen  $E=mc^2$  or heard of Einstein's theories, but they could go into great detail about the properties and uses of sulfuric acid and elaborate on three methods for its manufacture.”*

While there is no “typical” Peace Corps environment, Jane’s description of a Volunteer’s life in India relates to many Peace Corps assignments in Asia, Africa and South America. She says, “*People appreciated that we were different Americans compared to diplomats, tourists and high-level experts who came to India in what seemed to be luxury. As Peace Corps Volunteers go, we lived pretty well. We had running water and electricity. The university provided a large, empty stucco house which we managed to furnish attractively with furniture borrowed from the university and straw mats and cane chairs from the bazaars.*

“*Peace Corps Volunteers in India are provided with bicycles for transportation. I traveled four miles from our house to Women’s College sometimes by bus, but usually by bike to save time. More than one cyclist ran into the curb at the sight of a lady, much less an American lady, on a bicycle. They also had difficulty in believing us when we asked for third-class train tickets, since they expected us to travel first class. Everyone appreciated our feeble attempts to speak Hindi.”*

If you become a Volunteer, you will probably be faced with a chronic shortage of supplies in secondary schools. You may have to use the “bailing wire and chewing gum” technique. You may build your own blackboards, or line up 50 students at one microscope. You may be describing the moon’s pull on the tides to children who have never seen an ocean, or the polar ice-

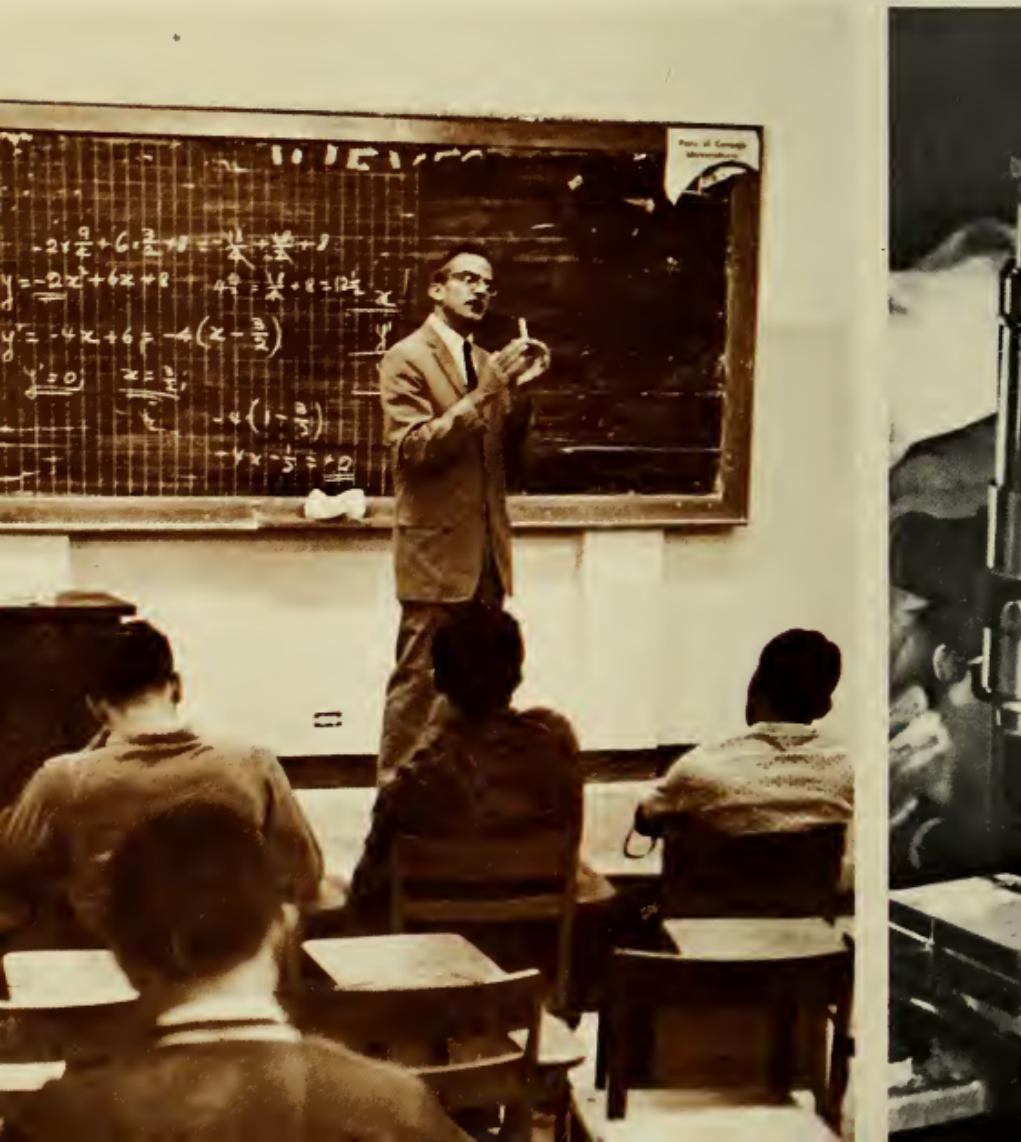


caps to pupils who have never heard of snow. You may encounter age-old traditions and outdated methods of education; you may find that the religious beliefs of your students allow little acceptance of the scientific theories you teach.

You may have to improvise, like the Peace Corps biology teacher in Malawi who said, *"One of the first things we did here was to start a collection of plants and animals to learn the major phyla. The students starting bringing in snakes and bugs and putting them in cans I had lying around. The only trouble was, they would sometimes forget to tell me, and I would open a can for something only to find a six-inch centipede or scorpion in it."*

*"Another day I walked into the lab and found a six-foot cobra coiled up on the floor. We have plenty of them around, and to the delight of the students, I didn't know this one was dead."*

Peace Corps Volunteers are demonstrating the



world over that a shortage of textbooks and supplies is no insurmountable handicap to scientific and mathematical education, if the teacher has enough imagination.

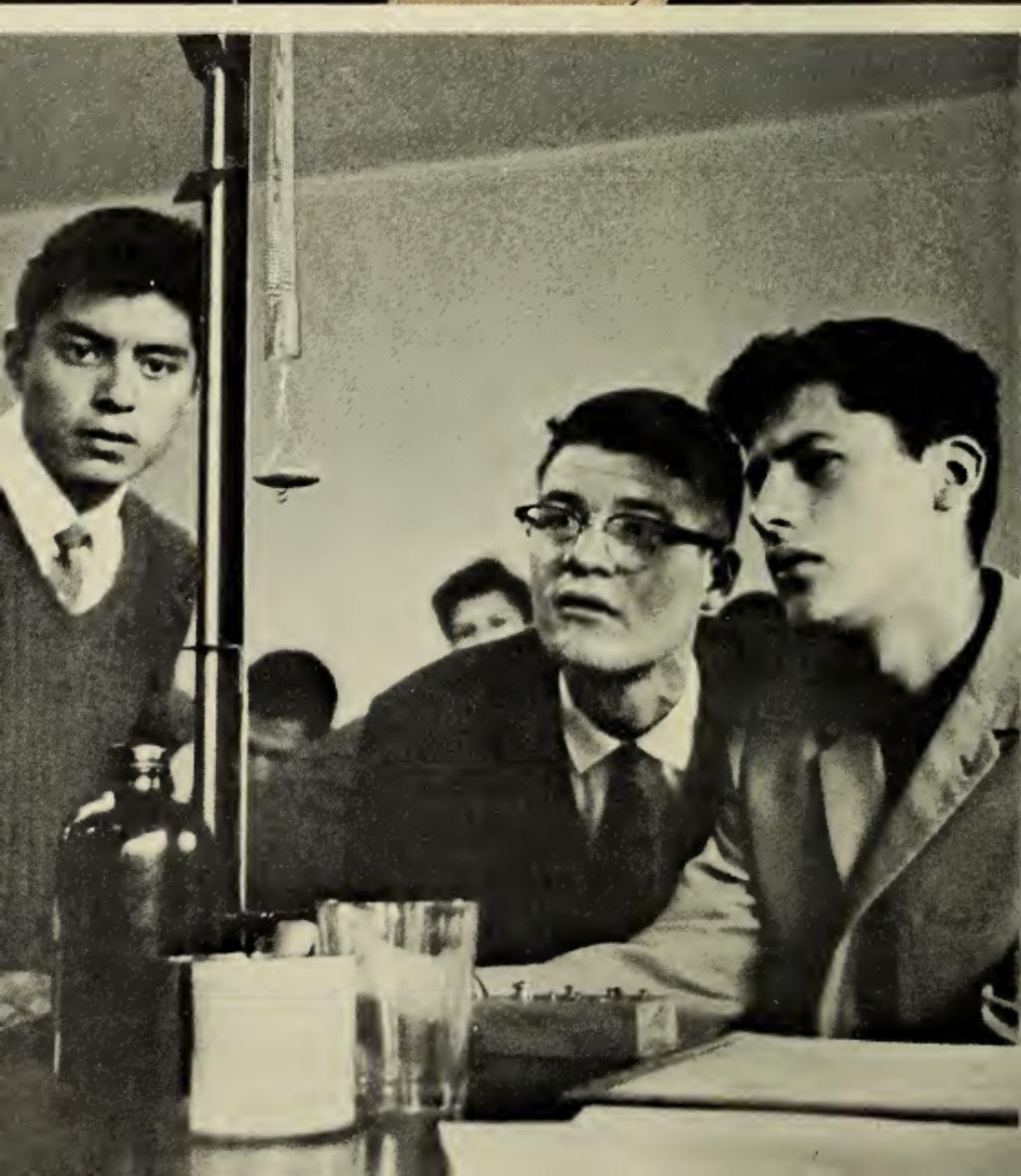
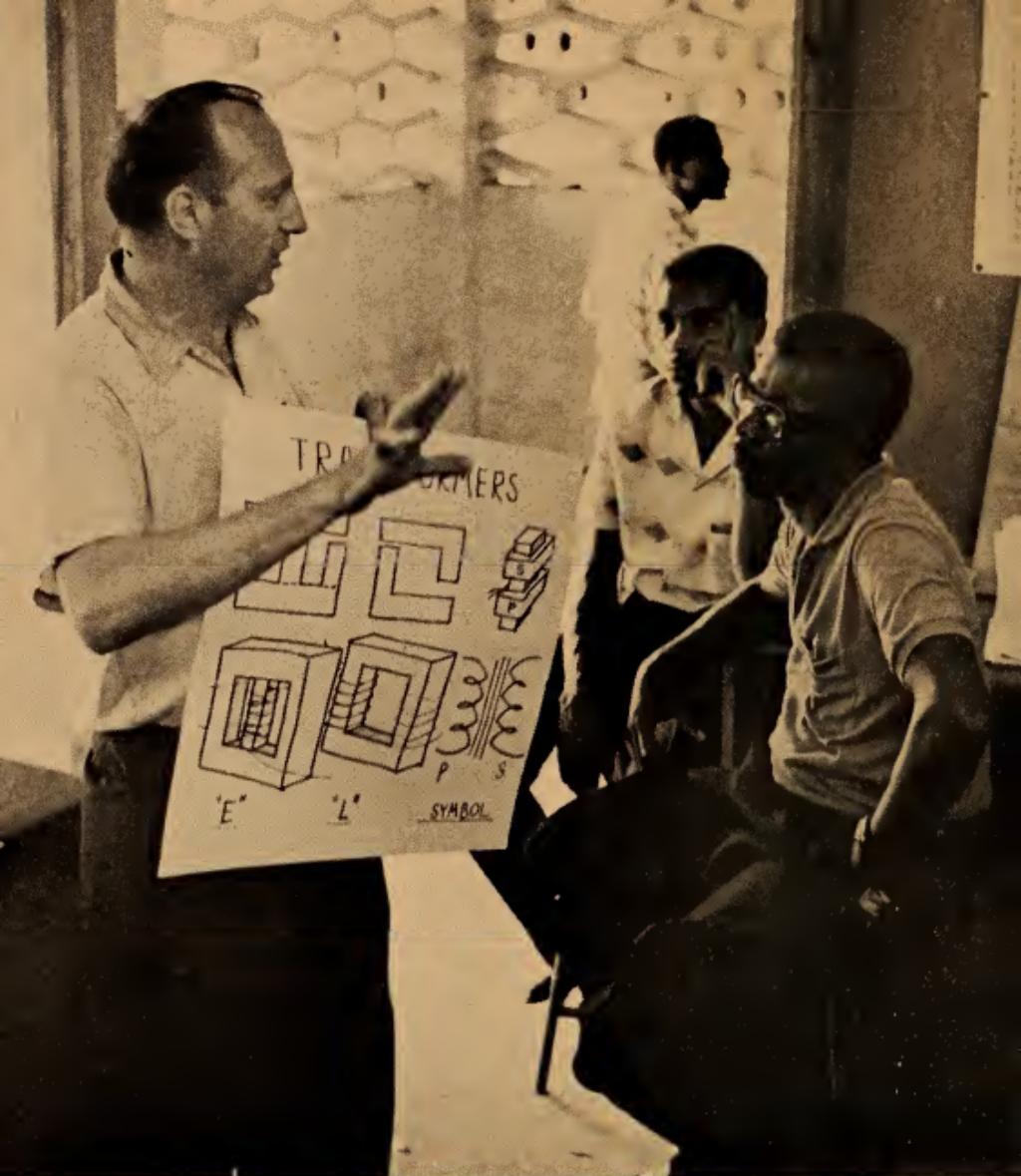
As a Peace Corps Volunteer science or mathematics teacher, you will be helping to shape a country's future in your classroom, whether you conduct botany labs at the edge of a tropical rain forest, or graduate seminars at a university in a nation's capital. Each Volunteer meets the challenge of Peace Corps teaching in his own way.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

College and university graduates without education courses and teacher training, as well as certified and experienced teachers, are in great demand.

If you have a liberal arts degree with a major





or minor in mathematics or one of the sciences, you are eligible to apply. More than 70 per cent of all Volunteer teachers abroad had never taught before entering the Peace Corps. The experience of these Volunteers has demonstrated that the Peace Corps training program equips college graduates without previous teacher training to become effective overseas teachers.

About two-thirds of all Volunteer teachers serve in secondary schools. If you hold a B.A. degree, you will probably teach at this level. Volunteers with graduate degrees may qualify to teach in colleges and universities.

Experienced teachers especially are invited to serve in the Peace Corps. They often provide excellent balance for programs which are made up of Volunteers who have had no previous experience. Many experienced teachers have found that their work overseas with the Peace Corps brings new insights into their professional careers.

The need for teachers is both real and immediate. Nearly all have been assigned a full time teaching load and are given a degree of teaching and auxiliary responsibilities that is seldom the lot of the beginning teacher in an American secondary school. There is no easing-in or adjustment period; the Volunteer is usually thrust into a full time job that makes tremendous demands upon his mental and physical resources. There is much to do and few professional people to do it.

This is the challenge offered to a Peace Corps teacher. If you accept, you can play a direct role in helping those you teach achieve a better way of life. You may open the door of knowledge to a child who might otherwise never have a chance to go to school. You will assist a country striving to reach its potential.

You may feel, as one Volunteer who wrote from Nigeria: "*It is we who are really learning here. What we are finding out about foreign relations, human sensitivity and aspiration—and ourselves—is more than we could ever hope to teach.*"

**TO BECOME**

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- You must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old. There is no upper age limit. Good health is a necessary prerequisite but Peace Corps physical standards are flexible.
- Married couples with no dependents under 18 are encouraged to apply. Both must, however, qualify as Volunteers. They will be assigned to the same project.
- You do not have to know a foreign language.
- Don't be deterred because you think you lack necessary skills. Many people tend to underestimate their capabilities.
- Submit a Peace Corps Volunteer application. Submission of an application in no way obligates you. Your final decision will come at the time you are invited to train.
- Take the Peace Corps Placement Test. There is no passing or failing grade. It is a tool to aid the Peace Corps in evaluating your capabilities.

**YOU WILL TRAIN . . .** At an American college or university. Perhaps half of your normal 10 to 12-week training period will be concentrated on the language of the country in which you will serve. Modern laboratory techniques will give you a working fluency in one of 42 different languages, from Amharic to Swahili.

**A NORMAL TOUR . . .** Including training, will last from 24 to 27 months. If you choose, you may extend your service up to one year, or re-enroll for another two years in the same, or a different country.

**YOU WILL BE PAID . . .** An allowance to cover food, clothing, housing and incidentals. Medical care and transportation are provided by Peace Corps. For the duration of your service, you accumulate a readjustment allowance of \$75 monthly. You may allot from this allowance in some instances. The allowance is subject to U.S. taxes only.

**MILITARY OBLIGATION . . .** Is not satisfied by Peace Corps service. However, Volunteers are deferred for the duration of their assignments.

**TO OBTAIN AN APPLICATION . . .** Request one from Peace Corps, Washington, D. C. 20525; from the Peace Corps Liaison Officer on your college or university campus; from your Civil Service Commission Office; or from your local post office.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, WRITE:**

**Peace Corps**  
**Washington, D.C. 20525**

**ATTN: OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**